



# THE EUREKA REPORTER

## Loggers claim Big Five

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Eureka's Ryan Stearns threw a complete-game, three-hit shutout as the Loggers won the opening game of a doubleheader against Arcata 3-0 on Saturday, clinching the Big Five championship outright.

For icing on the cake, Eureka's Tyler Plummer got the game-winning RBI in the nightcap, delivering a pinch-hit single in the bottom of the seventh inning, and the Loggers improved to 11-0 in league (13-9-1 overall) with the sweep.

Since dropping a doubleheader against Windsor April 17, the Loggers have won 11 consecutive games, and earned the league pennant for a second straight season.

"It was a great team win in the first game," said Eureka head coach Matt Pidgeon. "We had good pitching, good defense and timely hitting. In the second game, defensively we weren't that great, but a win's a win.

"The guys are excited, and they deserve it. They've worked hard all year."

Stearns had six strikeouts in the opener, while at the plate, Jared Towns and Jordan Davis each went 2-for-3 with a run scored.

In the nightcap, Arcata scored two runs in the top of the first to jump on top 2-0, but the Loggers responded in the bottom of the inning as senior Brandon Vitale hit a two-run home run to right-center, giving his team a 3-2 lead.

The Loggers added two runs in the third and fourth innings, taking advantage of defensive mistakes by the Tigers with aggressive base running, and led 7-2 through five.

Eureka had 13 hits in the game, but also committed nine errors in the field, something that made the contest interesting down the stretch.

Arcata put up three runs in the top of sixth on RBI singles from Mitch Provolt and D.J. Hancock, and the closed the gap to 7-5.

In the top of the seventh, the Tigers loaded the bases with no outs on two defensive miscues, and Alex Cunha delivered with a two-run single to tie the game 7-7.

In the bottom of the frame, however, the Loggers, who had changed their typical starting lineup for the nightcap, brought their seniors back in, and they finished the job.

After Davis led off the inning with a single, and advanced to second and third on passed balls, the Tigers intentionally walked pinch hitters Jimmie Jessee and Jared Towns, loading the bases and setting the table for Plummer.

With an 0-2 count, Plummer blasted a single between shortstop and third to end the game.

“They came out, stepped up and competed, and they earned the title,” said Arcata head coach Troy Ghisetti.

The Tigers finished league play with an 8-4 record (which was the same record they had last year that earned them a share of the league title) and is 15-8 overall.

“It was a good season for us and we finished with a good record,” Ghisetti said. “Now we just need to prepare for (North Coast Sections), and Eureka is the type of team we’ll be playing, so we’ve got to be tougher mentally.”

The Loggers earned an automatic berth into the NCS playoffs, which start May 20.

Eureka will finish up league play at McKinleyville on Wednesday, before the NCS seedings meeting next Sunday.

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